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### EXPLORING CRITICAL FACTORS OF TOURIST SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON ISLAMIC TOURISTS DESTINATIONS IN MALAYSIA

*Tourism industry is one of the largest service industries in Malaysia and it has great impact on national economy. The main objective of this study is to explore the factors that lead to tourist's satisfaction in terms of Islamic tourist destinations. This research will conduct 3 stages of data analysis: exploratory factor analysis; confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to test the hypothesis. This research is necessary to provide a better understanding of Muslim tourist satisfaction in Malaysian Islamic tourist destination in different facets. The identification of significant factors influencing Muslim tourist satisfaction to revisit Malaysia for the purpose of making strategic marketing plans can be made to encourage Muslim tourists to visit Malaysia.*

**Keywords:** religious motivation, destination image, perceived value, service quality, Islamic tourism, satisfaction, Malaysia.

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### ВИВЧЕННЯ ФАКТОРІВ ЗАДОВОЛЕНOSTІ ТУРИСТІВ: ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ НАПРЯМІВ МУСУЛЬМАНСЬКОГО ТУРИЗМУ В МАЛАЙЗІЇ

*У статті показано, що індустрія туризму — одна з найбільших галузей сфери послуг Малайзії з великим впливом на національну економіку. Вивчено чинники, які впливають на задоволеність туристів ісламського туристичного напрямку. Проведено 3 етапи аналізу даних: оцінювання факторної структури; оцінювання чинників за результатами спостереження і моделювання структурними рівняннями для перевірки гіпотези. Це дослідження необхідне для кращого розуміння задоволеності туристів-мусульман у Малайзії в різних аспектах. Виявлення істотних факторів, які впливають на задоволеність мусульманських туристів та їх бажання провести повторний візит, допоможе в розробці стратегічних маркетингових планів із залучення туристів до Малайзії.*

**Ключові слова:** релігійна мотивація, імідж туристичного напрямку, сприймана цінність, якість обслуговування, мусульманський туризм, задоволеність, Малайзія.

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### ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ФАКТОРОВ УДОВЛЕТВОРЕННОСТИ ТУРИСТОВ: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ПО НАПРАВЛЕНИЯМ МУСУЛЬМАНСКОГО ТУРИЗМА В МАЛАЙЗИИ

*В статье показано, что индустрия туризма — одна из крупнейших отраслей сферы услуг Малайзии с большим влиянием на национальную экономику. Изучены факторы, влияющие на удовлетворенность туристов исламского туристического направления. Проведены 3 этапа анализа данных: оценка факторной структуры; оценка факторов по результатам наблюдения и моделирование структурными уравнениями для проверки гипотезы. Это исследование необходимо для лучшего понимания удовлетворенности туристов-мусульман в Малайзии в различных аспектах. Выявление существенных факторов, влияющих на удовлетворенность мусульманских туристов и их желание совершить повторный визит, поможет в разработке стратегических маркетинговых планов по привлечению туристов в Малайзию.*

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**Ключевые слова:** религиозная мотивация, имидж туристического направления, воспринимаемая ценность, качество обслуживания, мусульманский туризм, удовлетворенность, Малайзия.

**1. Introduction.** Tourism industry is one of the largest and fastest growing service industries in the world and day by day this industry is getting broader (Jones & Haven-Tang, 2005; Rosentraub and Joo, 2009; Vu and Turner, 2009; Cohen, 2008). Tourism industry makes considerable contributions to earning foreign currency in both developed and developing countries (Sinclair, 1998; Sharpley & Telfer, 2002). Tourism industry of any country increases economic growth, employment opportunity of local people, earning foreign currency etc. Islamic tourism is a new concept to attract Muslim tourists to the tourist places related to Islam and its heritage. In today's tourism industry, Islamic tourism plays an important role. Allah S. W. T revealed many verses of holy Quran regarding visiting the nature and make human being physically and spiritually strong. As examples, a few verses in Quran encouraging traveling are: Al-Imran :137; Al-An'am :11; Al-Nahl : 36; Al-Naml :69; Al-'Ankaboot : 20; Al-Room : 42/9; Saba' (Sheba) : 18; Yousuf : 109; Al-Hajj : 46; Faater : 44; Ghafer:82/21; Muhammad: 10; Younus : 22; and Al-Mulk :15' (Pickthall, 1976; Yusuf Ali, 2005; Farahani, and Henderson, 2010). Allah S.W.T said in Holy Quran "Travel in the land and see how Allah originated the creation, and then Allah will bring forth the creation of the Hereafter" (Al-Ankaboot: 29). In another verse Allah S.W.T said "Tell them to explore the earth and see what caused (the fall) and what happened against mankind" (An-Naml : 69).

**2. Literature Review.** Islamic tourism: Different authors define Islamic tourism differently. According to Shakiry (2006), Islamic tourism is a specific type of tourism for Muslim tourists. Muslim tourists can do whatever they like to do except the activities that violate Islamic values and rules. The tourists have to follow the guidance of Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). According to Islamic Tourism Cerner Malaysia (ITC) "Islamic tourism is defined as any activity, event, experience or indulgence, undertaken in a state of travel that is Islamically compliant, with the purpose to interface within Islamic framework, with one or all of the following: history, arts, culture, heritage, way of life, economy, health, education and any other human interests". Dogan (2011) defines Islamic tourism as referring visiting Islamic places for the reason of recreation and entertainment. But tourists have to remember that they have to follow Islamic culture, behavior during visiting Islamic places. The tourist activities of Muslim tourists and other religion tourists are different. Another definition given by (Al-Hamarneh, 2008; OIC, 2008b; Henderson, 2009), tourism activities conducted by Muslim people, but it is not mandatory that only Muslims do that tourism. Sometimes Islamic tourism influences non-believers. Islamic tourism is helpful to inform about Islamic history, heritage to other people.

**Religious Motivations:** There are close relations between tourism and religious motivation. Henderson (2003) found in his research tourists are religiously motivated to visit religious destinations. Religious destinations refer to events, religious festivals, memorable places. He also found that religious tourism gives tourist mental and spiritual benefits. Religious motivation has direct and influential role in overall tourist behavior. A tourist choose tourist destinations, selects product and service during a

visit based on his or her religious belief (Weidenfeld & Ron, 2008). According to Fang et al. (2008), a tourist is interested in taking decision to visit any particular destination from his or her own interest but religion plays a role for taking decision.

*Customer perceived value:* Perceived value defines the comparison of the benefits or output with the price of product or service (Zeithaml, 1988; Bigne' et al., 2000; Teas and Agarwal, 2000). Perceived value is related to customer satisfaction. If customers get positive value then they are satisfied and if they get negative value then they are dissatisfied with product or service. According to Grewal et al., 1998; Bigne' et al., 2000; Cronin et al., 2000, there are 2 factors in perceived value; (1) benefits for customers, for instance, economic benefit, social benefit, relational benefit and (2) sacrifice or expenses of customers, for instance price of product or service, time spend perceived risk.

*Service quality:* Service quality is the customer's evaluation of expected service and the actual service (Parasuraman et al., 1985). According to Zeithaml & Bitner (2003), service quality is customer's judgment of standard or quality of the service. Service quality is the core of business prosperity of service industry (Shahin & Dabestani, 2010). Better service quality brings more customers and generates more revenue. By considering the importance of service quality of tourist destinations, managers of every tourist destinations are very concerned to improve the quality of the service. By improving the service, managers can satisfy their tourists and make them loyal towards destinations (Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003). According to Sparks and Westgate (2002), poor service quality of any particular service industry hampers the potentiality of that business and it makes customers switch service providers. It is also applicable for tourism industry. If any particular tourist destination fails to provide better service then customers will switch to another destination (Sparks and Westgate, 2002). Tourist service is very sensitive, intangible, and imperishable. Today's tourist is very conscious about service quality of a tourist destination. If service quality of any destination meets expectations of tourists, then it is easy to attract more tourists to it (Kamndampully and Duddy, 2001).

*Tourist satisfaction:* Tourist satisfaction refers to the pleasure of a tourist after visiting any particular tourist destination. Tourist measure satisfaction by comparing the expected service with actual service (Severt et al., 2007; Chen and Tsai, 2007). Baker and Crompton (2000) described tourist satisfaction as the emotional state of tourists after visiting desired tourist destinations. It could be positive or negative. Tourist satisfaction is mainly related with the emotional state of tourist who attains experience to visit any particular tourist destination. It is generally related with mental state of the tourist rather than physical state. Tourist can feel when he or she gets satisfaction by visiting favorite destination (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Kozak, 2002a; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Heng and Chou, 2006; Alegre & Garau, 2010).

*Perceived value and tourist satisfaction:* Perceived value is the evaluation of customer on any product or service based on cost and benefits of a product (Cronin et al. 2000; Zeithaml, 1988b), and it is also one of determinants of customer satisfaction. In service industry, perceived value has a significant role to make customers satisfied. If customers get greater value equivalent to cost then they are satisfied with service (Bolton and Drew, 1991; Riechheld, 1996; Fornell et al. 1996). According to Hallowell (1996) and Athanassopoulos (2000), customer's positive

perception of value is the antecedents of customer satisfaction. Petrick and Backman (2002a) conducted a research on golf traveler's value perception and they concluded that perceived value is important factor for golf traveler's satisfaction. To find out the relation between perceived value and satisfaction, Chen and Chen (2005) conducted a research on university students. They also found positive value perception of any destination that makes students satisfied. According to Deslandes, (2003) and Chen & Tsai (2007), tourist's positive perceived value helps make tourist satisfied.

*Service quality and tourist satisfaction:* Service quality has also been associated with customer satisfaction. Service quality is the overall valuation of service; it is not only core product or service but also other supporting service (Zeithaml, 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Sureshchandar et al., 2002). Any customer who is happy with service quality is likely to be more satisfied compared to other customers (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Spreng & McKoy, 1996; Caruana, 2002; Spreng & Chiou, 2002). Service quality in tourism has great importance for the industry. Better service quality can attract tourists to the destination as well as make tourists satisfied. According to Kumra (2008), tourist satisfaction is the final result or outcome of service quality. He directed a research "Rural Tourism in India". He also assumed that service quality of India tourist destination can satisfy both local and international tourists. Lee (2009) led a research on Taiwanese tourist destination and he stated that Taiwanese tourist department can satisfy tourists by offering better service quality of destinations. It was proved by the study of Olsen (2002) that superior service quality brings satisfaction of customer of any industry and finally that satisfaction ends with the loyalty of customers. It is not very easy to make customer satisfied and loyal. Better service quality can enhance chances to make customer satisfied and loyal.

**3. Methodology.** For this research, we generated 29 items from 3 independent variables (religious motivation, perceived value, and service quality) and 1 dependent variable tourist satisfaction. We used the pilot study with 50 respondents from different Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia. During the pilot testing we found some mistakes in a questionnaire. After modifying a questionnaire we distributed 400 questionnaires at various Islamic tourist destinations in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Melaka, Negri Sembilan, Johor, Perak, and Penang as well as Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). This research employed a survey via convenient sampling procedure. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research before distributing questionnaires. The respondents for this research were the tourists who visited different Islamic tourist destinations in Malaysia from July 2012 to September 2012. The survey was conducted over a 3-month period. In addition, each of the named items was measured using the 5-point scale (1= strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree). After examining the questionnaires, this research kept only those that were fully completed. For the successful completion of this research this study has rejected 46 questionnaires and has kept 354 questionnaires for further analysis.

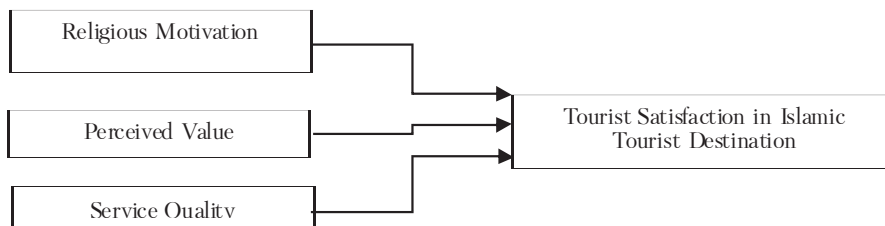


Figure 1. The Proposed model

**4. Result and Discussion.** SPSS 18 version software was used to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis was conducted to find out demographic background of the tourists. The demographics part comprises gender, age, marital status, country of residence, academic qualification, profession, monthly income, number of visits to Malaysia, name of a destination visited. In terms of respondent's gender, Table 1 shows that 55.6% of the respondents were male and 46.4 were female. The classification of samples in terms of their marital status presents that 46.3% of respondents were single, 53.7% respondents were married. Most respondents were between 25 to 34 years old, their percentage is 44.4%. The second highest percentage of respondents are 35 and above. This group represents 28.2%. Between 15-24 and below 15 were 22.9% and 4.5% respectively. With regard to education of the respondents, the highest number (48.3%), of the respondents were college graduates (Bachelor). Some respondents completed Master's and Doctoral programs. Percentage of Master degree holders was 34.2% and Percentage of Doctoral programs was 6.2%. A large number (33.3%) of the respondents informed that their monthly income is \$1000 to \$2999, followed by 31.6% respondents, who showed their monthly income as between \$3000 to \$4999. Whereas, 22.9% respondents' monthly income is above \$ 5000. Professions of majority respondents are business owner with 40.4%, followed by 26.0% job holder, 19.2% students and 7.6% academicians. It was the first-time visit for most of the respondents (47.7%) followed by 20.3% respondents visit for the second time. Among the popular Islamic tourist destination of Malaysia, most of the respondents (37.3%) visited National Mosque of Malaysia, located in Kuala Lumpur. The second most visited destination was Putrajaya Mosque in Federal Territory Putrajaya with 16,9%, followed by International Islamic University Malaysia, 11,9%.

**Reliability Analysis:** To test the goodness of all variables the test was carried for was the reliability analysis using the Chronbach's alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha was chosen to analyze the degree of consistency among the items in a construct. The study by Hair et al., (2010) indicates that the Cronbach's alpha must be at least 0.70 for the results to be reliable. The value for each variable is above 0.70 indicating that the variables are reliable. The result of the reliability analysis is given below.

**Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):** Generally higher factor loading specifies the stronger affiliation of an item to a specific factor. The findings of this research indicate that each of 3 dimensions, namely, religious motivation, perceived value and service quality were homogeneously loaded to different factors. On the other hand, the reliability coefficients of those 3 factors are: religious motivation (.821), perceived value (.777), service quality (.891), respectively. On the other hand, KMO index and Bartlett's test of sphericity weighed the suitability of the data. According to Hair et

al., 2010, the KMO value should be higher than 0.5. For this reason the factor loading for all the items exceeding the minimum value of 0.50 were considered in this study. From the analysis we found our KMO value is .684. Beside that, the results of Bartlett's test of sphericity are all significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). Principal components analysis revealed the presence of 3 components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 37.398%, 17,787%, 9.210% respectively. As a result, the outcome of these tests reveals the suitability of the data for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Factor analysis also confirmed that the construct validity of the scales could be performed adequately. Those items that did not meet the requirement and that were dropped are RM6, PV2, SQ1, SQ3 and SQ10.

**Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents**

Descriptions	Frequency	%	Cumulative (%)
Gender:			
Male	193	55.6	55.6
Female	161	46.4	100.0
Age:			
Below 15	16	4.5	4.5
15-24	82	22.9	27.4
25-34	154	44.4	71.8
35 and above	102	28.2	100.0
Marital Status:			
Single	151	46.3	46.3
Married	203	53.7	100.0
Country of residence:			
Middle East	154	46.3	46.3
America	43	12.7	59.0
Europe	37	11.0	70.0
Asia	98	23.2	93.2
Africa	22	6.8	100.0
Academic Qualification:			
O Level or Equivalent	18	6.2	6.2
A Level or Equivalent	22	5.1	11.3
Graduate (Bachelor)	173	48.3	59.6
Master's	119	34.2	93.8
Doctoral	22	6.2	100.0
Profession:			
Student	71	19.2	19.2
Job Holder	138	26.0	45.2
Business Owner	92	40.4	85.6
Academician	33	7.6	93.2
Home Maker (Housewife)	17	5.1	98.3
Others	3	1.7	100.0
Income:			
Below \$ 1000	100	22.9	22.9
\$ 1000-\$ 2999	137	33.3	56.2
\$ 3000-\$ 4999	99	31.6	87.9
\$ 5000 and Above	18	12.1	100.0
Number of Visits to Malaysia			
1 <sup>st</sup> time	204	47.7	47.7
2 <sup>nd</sup> time	111	20.3	68.0
3 <sup>rd</sup> time	15	9.9	77.9
4 <sup>th</sup> time and more	24	22.1	100.0
Name of the Destination Visited			
Islamic Arts Museum, Kuala Lumpur	24	6.8	6.8



The End of Table 1

Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative (%)
Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque	17	5.1	11.9
Selangor Islamic Arts Garden Complex	25	6.8	18.7
Putrajaya Mosque	64	16.9	35.6
Penang Islamic Museum	8	1.7	37.3
International Islamic University Malaysia	41	11.9	49.2
Shah Alam Blue Mosque	12	3.4	52.6
National Mosque, Kuala Lumpur	129	37.3	89.8
National Islamic Museum	34	10.2	100.0

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Parameters	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.684
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:	
Approx. Chi-Square	5231.356
Df	136
Sig	.000

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalue			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.358	37.398	37.398	6.358	37.398	37.398	4.634	27.256	27.256
2	3.024	17.787	55.185	3.024	17.787	55.185	3.293	19.372	46.628
3	1.566	9.210	64.394	1.566	9.210	64.394	3.020	17.766	64.394

*Hypothesis testing:* The causal relationship of the constructs was assessed using the regression analysis as summarized below.

*Hypothesis 1:* Religious motivation has a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction

The results of this study show that the association between religious motivation and tourist satisfaction is not positive. The multiple regression result shows religious motivation has a beta of .004 and significant p-value is .907. The significant value is greater than alpha at 0.05 and hypothesis is not accepted. Although some researchers mentioned there is a close relation between tourist travel motivation and satisfaction, Beerli and Martin (2004) recommend that "motivation is the need that drives an individual to act in a certain way to achieve the desired satisfaction". According to Yoon and Uysal (2005), tourist satisfaction work as a mediator between travel motivation and tourist destination loyalty. But this hypothesis is not supported in Malaysian Islamic tourism context. Yoon and Uysal (2005) found that push motivation is not positively related with tourist satisfaction. Religious motivation is a part of push motivation.

*Dependent Variable: Tourist Satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 2:* Perceived value has a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction.

The results of this study show that the association between perceived value and tourist satisfaction is positive. The multiple regression result shows perceived value has a beta of .317 and significant p-value is .000. The significant value is smaller than

alpha at 0.05 and hypothesis is accepted. Chen and Tsai (2008) found positive relation between perceived value and satisfaction as well as perceived value and loyalty. There is also some other empirical evidence that perceived value has a positive effect on customer satisfaction in tourism service industry (Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Murray and Howat, 2002; Walter et al., 2002; Moliner et al., 2007).

**Table 4. Reliability Analysis and Factor Loading**

Factors	Loading	Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Religious Motivation		37.398	.821
RM1	.857		
RM2	.808		
RM3	.631		
RM4	.796		
RM5	.520		
Perceived Value		17.787	.777
PV1	.727		
PV3	.772		
PV4	.655		
PV5	.746		
PV6	.577		
Service Quality		9.210	.891
SQ2	.573		
SQ4	.770		
SQ5	.692		
SQ6	.803		
SQ7	.850		
SQ8	.864		
SQ9	.821		

**Table 5. Coefficients**

Hypothesis	Standardized coefficient (Beta)	Significance (p value)	Remarks
Religious Motivation	.004	.907	Not Supported
Perceived Value	.317	.000	Supported
Service Quality	.606	.000	Supported

*Hypothesis 3:* Service quality has a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction.

The results of this study show that the association between service quality and tourist satisfaction is positive. The multiple regression result shows service quality has a beta of .317 and significant p-value is .000. The significant value is smaller than alpha at 0.05 and hypothesis is accepted. As supported by many studies on other countries, we confirm a positive relationship between quality and satisfaction in tourism industry (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Murray and Howat, 2002; de Rojas and Camarero, 2008; Ruiz et al., 2009).

**5. Conclusion.** This empirical study provides evidence that perceived value and service quality of tourist destination are closely associated with satisfaction of the tourist towards destination. As tourism contributes to economy of Malaysia, it can be argued that major findings of this study have significant policy and managerial implications for the country's core Islamic tourist destinations and support services in tourism. These are fundamental in extending length of stay, increasing satisfaction and enhancing destination loyalty of foreign Muslim tourists. Future research may



consider generating more precise applications related to importance of religion in choosing tourist destinations; especially its relation with destination image and destination loyalty.

Direction of further study: In this study the relationship between religious motivation and tourist satisfaction is not significant. But to get more specific outcome in this area there is a chance to find out if there is any positive relationship of religious motivation and tourist satisfaction mediated by selection of destination and destination image. The study suffers from a number of limitations. Even though the results are interesting and support previous studies, there are some limitations. Hence, the results cannot be easily generalized. This study used convenience sampling procedure which is a limitation and future studies can utilize stratified random sampling procedure with more samples. On the other hand, the EFA is difficult to generalize to a larger audience and there was a lack of experimental control for the questionnaire investigation, so the quality of questionnaire cannot be ensured.

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